



Vol. XLV.

LONDON, ONTARIO, DECEMBER 22, 1910

No. 952

EDITORIAL.

A special report, issued by the United States Bureau of Census, states that "No single factor has played so great a factor in the amelioration of the conditions of life on the farm as the telephone." The report adds that the beginning of the United States rural service was in Connecticut in 1881.

The United States Government's estimates for the year ending June, 1912, provide \$748,000,000 for expenditures, a reduction of nearly \$8,000,000, compared with the preceding year. It is noteworthy, however, that the Department of Agriculture receives an increase of \$1,799,355 to spend. Uncle Sam is bound to keep farming to the front.

Two pages of advertising were omitted from the Christmas Number, owing to pressure of space in the last form that went to press. Promptness in forwarding copy is essential to obtain good position, and the only way to be sure of securing insertion at all in these special numbers, while even with the regular issues there is danger of an advertisement being left out when copy is forwarded at the last minute.

Not your opinion, nor ours, nor somebody else's, but the solid, unassailable truth, as revealed by experiments and the commercial experience of men who keep accounts, is what we want to know. Opinions are neither here nor there. What are the facts? Discussions such as take place in the lecture rooms of the Winter Fairs serve to show how wide is the opportunity confronting our public experimenters. Variety in conditions affords scope for illimitable work. The more light we get, the more darkness we find to explore.

After all, success in farming does not consist in this or that or the other, but doing the best we can in every direction. There is room and need for improvement in the quality of many lines of farm products, and great opportunity for economy of production. These things may be done with much advantage to the individual producer, without any change at all in marketing conditions. But it will also pay, in many instances, to improve means of marketing, particularly with a view to building up a reputation for a good article, and securing the fruits of that reputation for the producer himself. Perhaps the strongest argument for co-operation from the producer's standpoint is that it secures to him a premium for quality. Some of its other advantages have been greatly overestimated.

Sounder advice could not be given Canadian beef-raisers than the suggestions offered at the Ontario Winter Fair by Messrs. McMillan and Campbell, that the men who raise the cattle should finish them. There is scarcely more reason for selling lean cattle than unfinished pigs and sheep, or thin horses. Raising runty steers on straw and overstocked pastures, and then selling the lean, raw-boned, pot-bellied, three-year-olds at a dirt-cheap price, for someone else to fatten on expensive concentrates, is poor business any way you look at it. No steer should reach the market older than thirty months, and very few should see their second birthday. We cannot afford to let them stand still. Every day passed without gain means maintenance food wasted. Keep the calves gaining from birth to market.

Bookkeeping Systems: Money to be Made.

In most mercantile enterprises representing a \$10,000 or greater investment, careful and thorough account is kept of every transaction. Farming differs from these other commercial enterprises in its nature and in the frequency of the turnover—the business man figures on from at least two to four turnovers each year. In other respects, both are commercial undertakings, and the same precision of accounts which is so profitable in the dry-goods store would be quite as beneficial on the general farm.

But the great trouble has been to get a workable system of bookkeeping for the farm. The business of farming does not permit of as definite and simple classification as the transactions of the shop. Many men following the farming business have solved this problem for themselves, and have worked out a system of bookkeeping which meets their needs. There are thousands of others who would appreciate any help obtainable in this line. To bring these two classes together, and to stimulate the other class that has not essayed the task, we offer \$25.00, to be given in three prizes of \$12.00, \$8.00 and \$5.00, respectively, for the three best systems of Farm Bookkeeping submitted to us. We want systems as complete as possible, that are in actual use, and covering all phases of farm operations. Long dissertations are not necessary; use simply words enough to thoroughly explain the system you use, and use plenty of illustrations of your pages to make all points clear.

Letters in this contest will be received until January 13th, 1911. We want every man who has a good system to present it for the sake of his neighbor.

To Bring Power to Farmers' Doors

Expanding somewhat the news item published in "The Farmer's Advocate" last week, concerning Hon. Adam Beck's suggestion about bringing electric current to the doors of Ontario farmers and residents of unincorporated hamlets, we may as well correct one or two misimpressions arising from erroneous newspaper reports. The great and increasing demand for Hydro-Electric power by such towns as Tillsonburg, Norwich, Mitchell, Seaford, Tavistock, and so on, will mean that power transmission lines of lower tension than the trunk lines, will be built, radiating from such centers as Berlin, Stratford, London and other cities reached by the main transmission lines. In addition to these, there will be electric railroads ramifying throughout the Province. The lower-tension transmission lines referred to will be built by the Hydro-Electric Commission upon the same terms as the trunk lines, the several municipalities being responsible for their respective shares of the cost. But even on the lower-tension transmission lines the current will not be stepped down to a sufficient extent that they may be tapped economically by individual users or small groups of users. It is a problem, therefore, how to bring electric current to the farmer's door. For obvious reasons, it is not feasible, or, at all events, expedient, for rural municipalities having no municipal demand for power, and having a very problematical farmers' demand in view, to contract for a specified amount of current, and then assume the responsibility of disposing of it.

So Mr. Beck raises the question whether it would not be well to pass an act similar to the act put through two or three years ago, applying to rural telephones, whereby, say, twenty farmers may petition their council to build a telephone line (raising funds by debentures), and charge the cost to the property of the participants, with provision for repayment in ten years. By this plan, telephones may be built and paid for on the same basis as other local improvements. Why not let a municipality contract for a certain amount of power on behalf of petitioning ratepayers, and then build low-tension distributing lines, charging the expense of the lines, as well as the cost of the contracted power proportionately against the property of the ratepayers interested? It must again be emphasized that the Hydro-Electric Commission does not build distribution lines in either urban or rural municipalities. All it does is to deliver the current to the door of the municipality. The distribution lines might, however, in some cases, be strung along the poles of the radiating transmission lines, or along the poles of trolley roads.

There are a great many uses to which electric current may be put on the farm, such as lighting houses and barns, chopping grain, sawing wood, cutting feed, filling silos, washing, churning, pumping water, and so on. The question arises whether it will be more economical than wind-power, gasoline and acetylene generators. The matter will stand careful inquiry, though Mr. Beck is optimistic as to the advantages of electricity. At all events, the subject is worth considering.

It is all very well to inquire searchingly into every branch of one's business, and discard those lines which cannot be made to pay, but the man who demands too much sometimes gets nothing. There are men who can figure themselves out a vindication for neglecting any branch that demands enterprise, perseverance and steady work. They wear out good chairs sitting with hands in their pockets swapping stories, or drive daily to town to kill time. They won't feed stock, follow winter dairying, or grow any crops but grain or hay, for fear they will lose money. The consequence is they never make any. If the amount of time and energy they waste explaining why it doesn't pay to do things were devoted to finding the best way of doing them, there would be a different story to tell. We suppose there are some men to whom sixty-cent butter and twenty-cent hogs would look like a losing game. And possibly it might prove so—with their system of production. But there are better ways.

Our leading Canadian firm of implement manufacturers has invaded the United States, buying out the Johnston Harvester Co., of Batavia, N. Y. This company is old and well-known across the line, and employs at present 1,200 hands. The reason given by the Massey-Harris Company for this action is that it requires more capacity than can be provided by extending its present plants at Brantford and Toronto, and it is adroitly hinted that the Batavia plant is well situated to cater to foreign trade. Strange, isn't it, how the International Harvester Co. establish a plant in Canada so as to cater more advantageously to the export trade, while the Massey-Harris Company purchases a going concern abroad for a similar purpose? Is it that far-off fields look green, or is the Massey-Harris Company seeking to strengthen its hand in opposing reduction in the Canadian tariff on agricultural implements?